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Q: "Can third world radicalism be tempered by more U.S. aid and understanding?" Haig. "No."

## An Interview With Alexander Haig

by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Michael Ledeen

Q: What do you consider America's greatest foreign policy priorities?

Haig: There are three basic ingredients: consistency, reliability, and balance. Balance is somewhat more subtle than the other two. It involves the broad implications of political, military, economic, moral, and security interrelationships. They are all part of a single mosaic and must be managed in accordance with that conception.

These three goals can be accomplished only under the umbrella of confidence in our security capabilities, which are fundamentally threatened today by the eroding East-West balance. So these three basic elements are themselves linked to a fourth, crucial factor: American strength. And I would go beyond that: All these ingredients have to be brought together under a fundamental recognition of interdependence. That means multilateral approaches (which heretofore have not been successful) among all those who share common approaches with us and are threatened by the same forces that concern us.

Q: Some observers of your testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have concluded that the Reagan administration will not attempt any major innovations in foreign policy, but will focus on attempting to restore perceptions of American credibility and dependability. Is this accurate?

Haig: That is an oversimplification. The problem of consistency and the problem of reliability and the problem of balance will demand in some instances very innovative steps. We're not seeking change for change's sake. Yesterday's perceptions don't have to be molded to the conceptions that this administration may or may not have. We have been acting against our own best self-interests. So the most immediate task is to reverse a number of both nuanced and fundamentally sharp departures from actions which would be designed to achieve our basic goals.

For example, when one looks at the past handling of the human rights issue—and here I don't wish to be polemical at all—the functional separation of its treatment from the basic conduct of American foreign policy in a regional sense (done by regional bureaus) has distorted the issue, put in jeopardy the accomplishment of the objective itself, and has had a most deleterious effect upon the conduct of our other affairs with both regions and states. To be sure, from time to time it is necessary to focus on extraordinary abuses in a specific situation, thereby relegating other aspects of that situation to a secondary position. I contend that today the greatest area of concern to all free nations is the explosion of international terrorism and associated illegal interventions and wars of so-called national liberation by the Soviet Union and its proxies. I expect to give this issue a higher profile both in terms of our management of it and in the context of overall East-West relations.

Q: President Pertini of Italy recently told a French interviewer that he believed the Red Brigades were guided from outside his country, and he suggested that the terrorist central may lie in an area of the world which wants to see the elimination of Italy as a democratic bridge between Europe and Africa. Many people took him to mean that the Russians and their allies had such an interest, and were involved in such terrorist activities.

Haig: We are terribly concerned about international terrorism, and you can be sure that it will have a top priority in the immediate future. One of the problems we have faced in this field is the lack of first-rate intelligence. The information is surely available, and we are going to have to go out and get it.

Q: To get closer to home: Alfonso Robello, a former member of the San-

dinista ruling junta, has chosen exile and has denounced his colleagues for allowing Nicaragua to become a satellite of a satellite of the Soviet Union—Cuba. Another defector from Salvadoran guerrilla ranks says that there are about 200 Cuban military advisers with the Marxist rebels trying to overthrow the Salvadoran junta. And even American ambassador Robert White, long a critic of the junta, has recently said that the United States has solid evidence of Cuban involvement in Salvador, including the landing of a boatload of military personnel from Nicaragua. Can you confirm this information? And what will be the Reagan administration's position in Central America? In other words, are we prepared to accept another Nicaragua in Salvador?

Haig: It's clear that there has been heavy Cuban involvement in Salvador, and we are uncovering increasing evidence of Nicaraguan involvement.

Q: You mean with all like-minded nations around the world?

Haig: That's right.

Q: If this is the overall rubric, what about some of the other problems that you face at the outset of your tenure?

Haig: One priority is to seek to strengthen and integrate more effectively the Atlantic community of nations so as to really concert our policies. We must go beyond traditional or routine consultation.

Q: At the speed of the slowest ship in the Atlantic convoy?

Haig: Of course not. That pace must be determined by an essential consensus, but not unanimity. We clearly have a continuing urgent problem to deal with the North-South issue in more realistic terms. This is far more complicated than the Atlantic community concep-

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